IN THE KNOW

Roots of conflict

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, November 18, 2004

WB: Bribes driving away foreign investors from RP

Luisita death toll now 14

Tear gas suffocates 2 kids during dispersal

HACIENDA LUISITA, Tarlac City—Seven more people, including two children, were reported killed in Tuesday's dispersal of striking workers of Central Azucarera de Tarlac, raising the death toll to 14.



Tarlac cop chief sacked; police, soldiers pulled out



₱10-B NAVY LAND SCAM

Cory order forged, Drilon tells court

'Honorable' Jinggoy 9th witness

Reyes wife went abroad 48 times in 11 years—Imee

COA audit of PNR exposes can of worms

SPECIAL REPORT

OUTRAGE FROM MANILA TO BAGUIO TO DAVAO







WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

GMA heads for Chile for Apec

No parade, no dinner but solitary detention for Gen. Garcia


GARCIA

PNP chief sees arrest of photog's killer soon

Outrage

Open season

House starts budget sessions

3 UN hostages in hands of criminals, not Taliban

KABUL—Three UN workers kidnapped in Afghanistan are in the hands of criminals, not the Taliban-linked militants who have threatened to kill them, an Afghan Interior Ministry official said Wednesday.

"We don't think Jaish-e Muslimeen has control over them," said ministry spokesperson Lutfullah Mashal. "You can tell by the deadlines and the demands which keep being broken and relaxed.

"We think they are being held by some armed robbers who abducted them. Our reports suggest that the hostages are still in or around Kabul."

Filipino diplomat Angelito Nayan, British-Irish citizen Annetta Flanigan and Shqipe Hebibi of Kosovo were seized at gunpoint on Oct. 28 in Kabul after helping organize the country's presidential election.

A little-known rebel group called Jaish-al Muslimeen, or Army of Muslims, on Wednesday repeated its demand for the release of 26 jailed comrades in return for sparing their lives. The US military has ruled out freeing any prisoners.

But the Afghan Interior Ministry, which is leading the search for the trio, said it believed that the group was "not holding the hostages."

"The kidnappers are armed robbers, not Jaish-al Muslimeen," Mashal told The Associated Press. "We can say they are thieves."

Mashal said authorities believed that Jaish-al Muslimeen had paid the real kidnappers for a video recording of the hostages, which it used to bolster its claim of responsibility and stir fear that the group was copying the brutal tactics of Iraqi insurgents.

He said Jaish chief Akbar Agha did not have the resources to stage a kidnapping in Kabul.

"We are sure they are not far away," he said of the hostages. If Jaish militants were holding them, they would have released another video, he said.

The hostages have not been heard of since the beginning of last week when two were allowed to make calls home.

Mashal said Jaish might be in contact with the group whose men in camouflage uniforms snatched the workers from their car.

"We think the gang may have been trying to make contact with groups that were interested in them," he said. "But we don't think that Jaish has control over them—they are just a small group trying to make publicity."

While there has been speculation the hostages were not in the hands of the militants, the Interior Ministry has previously declined to comment or give any details of efforts to free the hostages.

Security forces were continuing to monitor traffic in the Kabul area to prevent the kidnappers from moving the hostages to a more remote area, Mashal said.

"We don't have a specific clue on where they are being kept," he said. "We are trying our best to secure their release."

Syed Khaled, a spokesperson for Jaish-al Muslimeen, insisted on Wednesday that its leaders were meeting to discuss what to do with the prisoners.

"The council will decide whether to hand over the hostages to the military men who decide their final fate," Khaled told the AP in a telephone call.

"When we are holding the people, how can others hold talks with the Afghan government?" he said.

Families and friends of the hostages appealed Tuesday for their release in the spirit of Eid al-Fitr, the Islamic festival which ended in Afghanistan on Monday.

"We understand that after 25 years of strife and uncertainty some people in Afghanistan may do desperate things," they said in a statement. "But the Afghan people are honorable."

AP, Reuters

Gov't asks media to stop speculating on hostages

By TJ Burgonio and Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE GOVERNMENT has kept a lid on efforts to obtain the release of two Filipino hostages in Iraq and Afghanistan and appealed to the media Wednesday to avoid speculating on the fate of Filipino diplomat Angelito Nayan and accountant Robert Tarongoy.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo warned that "undue speculations in the media on the nature of the negotiations and possible outcome of these two incidents are not helpful to anyone, specially to our two compatriots."

In a statement, Romulo said that negotiations were ongoing for the release of Nayan, 34, a UN worker abducted Oct. 28 in Kabul and Tarongoy, 31, who was kidnapped in Baghdad Nov. 1.

"Negotiations are still ongoing and we urge everyone to continue to hope and pray for our two *kababayans* to come home safely and soon," said Romulo.

Romulo said that the "information void," particularly in Nayan's case, was requested by the United Nations "while negotiations are going on."

In Malacañang, President Macapagal-Arroyo assured the families of Nayan and Tarongoy that the government is still doing everything to secure their release and bring them home.

Bleak prospects

"They are paramount in my prayers and I grieve for the agonizing ordeal that these two Filipinos and their families are passing through. We can only assure them and our people that indeed, we are leaving no stone unturned to bring our two *kababayans* safely home," she said in a speech set to be delivered at a dinner marking the end of the Muslim Ramadan.

Romulo dismissed speculations that prospects for the release of Nayan and Tarongoy were becoming bleak.

"The DFA has not said that the prospects for the release of these two hostages are bleak as reported in the press," Romulo said in a statement.

"The officials assigned to coordinate action on the ground in both Kabul and Baghdad, namely Undersecretaries Jose Brillantes and Rafael Seguis, are doing their utmost best, in spite of threats to their own personal safety, to accomplish their mission," he added.

Brillantes is coordinating with the UN and Afghan government in the negotiations for Nayan's release while Seguis was coordinating efforts to win the freedom of Tarongoy in Iraq.

Reports about intermediaries losing contact with Tarongoy's abductors as well as the virtual news blackout on the negotiations for Nayan's release had fanned speculations that hopes for their release were dimming.

"Contacts continue. They have never been broken," foreign affairs spokesperson Gilberto Asuque said.

The families and friends of Nayan, UK-Irish Annetta Flanigan and Kosovar Ishqipe Hebibi, have aired an emotional appeal to their abductors to free them unharmed.

In a joint statement circulated by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (Unama) and posted on the UN website, they voiced the hope that the people holding the three UN staffers would "place them somewhere safe where they can be found and restored to us."

Their families also conveyed messages of support and concern to the hostages.

As this developed, the government is distributing a security manual to some 6,000 Filipinos working in Iraq, specifying measures to take in the event of security threats.

With AP, AFP reports

Cory order forged, Drilon tells court



WITNESS for the prosecution, Senate President Franklin Drilon testifies on Wednesday at the Manila RTC.

'Not my signature'

Not in Palace records

Related case

Fictitious

Reyes wife went . . .



'Who paid'

No stealth

For investigation

WB: Bribes driving away foreign investors . . .

Likewise rampant

Major constraints

'Honorable' Jinggoy is 9th witness for defense

Movie as alibi

Ombudsman's budget

Wrong address

Conspiracy

'Not fit to be senator'

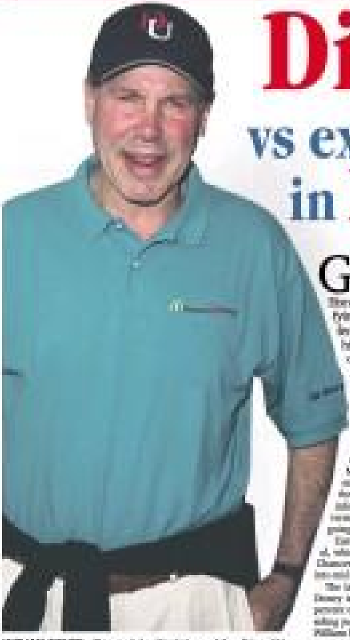
Untrue

Correction

THE DAILY GOSPEL

ENTERTAINMENT *Metro*

Disney CEO vs ex-'Most Powerful Man in Hollywood'





COA audit of PNR exposes can of worms

'Irregular, unconscionable'



UNION officers of the Philippine National Railways hold a press conference to press for the investigation of the alleged corrupt practices of the PNR officials led by its general manager Jose Ma. Sarasola II.

Two instances

Bank transactions

Conflicting entries

'Repeated malpractices'

Sarasola defends self

Food expenses

Phone allowances cut

In Sarasola's defense

RP-bound American on trial for child sex

China vows $1.2-M military aid to RP

Luisita death toll now 14

Financial assistance

Autopsy ordered

Workers regroup

Leftist lawmakers visit



Cory offers prayers for victims

Caravan of probers

Firearms at site

Resume negotiation

Tarlac cop chief sacked; police, soldiers pulled out

No power to call AFP

Probe of dispersal

Floating status



THE AUTHORITIES are being made to account for the death of

Overreaction?

Senate probe

No legal basis

Roots of conflict

Jose Cojuangco & Sons Inc.

Major development

Why name Luisita

Stock, not land distribution

Class A shares

Farm workers

REWRITING HISTORY

Erroneous book pulled out

Poor research

Book review



BI set to release detainees



Hypertension, BP course for nurses

The WORLD

Widening differences over Iraq threatens to divide Apec summit

Kidnapped aid worker feared killed in Iraq



HASSAN

Palestinian leader asks militants to halt attacks



ABBAS



HADLEY

Stephen Hadley replaces Rice

Global warming threatens Himalayas, Mt. Everest



NEW RECORD

WorldBriefs

Czechs mark Velvet Revolution

Teen jailed for Madrid blasts

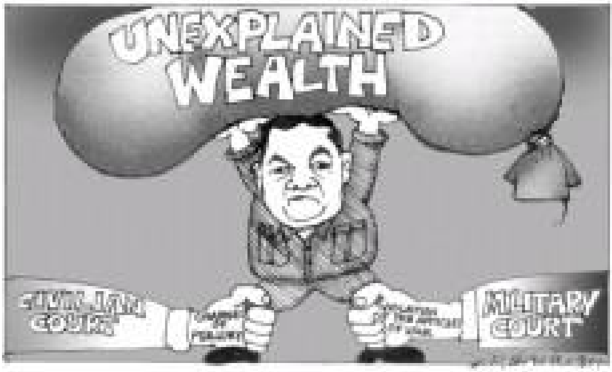
Hamas to boycott elections

Army officer charged with murder

Hillary to seek 2nd term in Senate

Latin America warned of 'terror' threat

Opinion



Bad start

Editorial

Transparency thresholds

Viewpoint

Juan L. Mercado

Good news

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

Seek truth in Luisita conflict

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivarez-Cunanan



Media and hoaxes

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo



Lost AFP moorings

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



Generous patrons

YOUNG BLOOD

Grace dela Cruz

Gross

Gabriel Gene Gomez

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

The INQUIRER is a member of the
PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE
The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

Giving ourselves as parents

LETTERS

Another Ormoc waiting to happen in Banahaw

Bush's revolution in Afghanistan, Iraq

Gov't works because of people

No imperial power has survived hubris

Question of the Week

Do you think President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is addressing the fiscal crisis with effective solutions? Why or why not?

Across the NATION

Cops say guns-for-hire killed mayor, mediaman



Solon urges Aklanons to help solve slaying

DETAILED WITNESS ACCOUNT

Police release sketch of broadcaster's assassin

Interest-free loans from Church planned



FRIENDSHIP

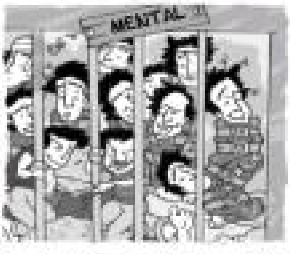
Gov't-MILF talks set in '05

Cavite gov backs 1 town, 1 product

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Help reaches Bicol mental hospital

THE FIRST institution for mental health in Bicol is in dire straits. Government-run Don Susano Jose Rodriguez Memorial Hospital (DSJRMH) in Pili, Camarines Sur has deteriorating facilities and weak iron grills in many of its wards, said Chona Cayoa-Belmonte, its chief psychiatrist.



Danger

Outreach

Taal celebrates festival of horses

TAAL, the heritage town in Batangas province known for its centuries-old houses, is also home to all the pretty horses in this part of the country.



WHETHER on horseback or riding the "tiburin," the Roman-inspired chariots, enthusiasts join the Festival of Horses in Taal, Batangas.

Horsemen's saint

Biggest number

Best breed



PRANA Escalante (right) with two of her close friends.

Her next climb to Mt. Halcon was fatal

"I WANT her to rest in peace," Antonio Escalante said when asked if he would pursue the investigation into the death of his daughter.

Food coupons not alms, says Camarines Sur governor



Gov't rejects hike in pay for submerged farms

Mayors want BF to let them be

GMA adviser accused of rape

A politician

Nothing unusual, at first



SANTA COPS

Makati only wants MRT taxes paid

PARAÑAQUE DRUG RAID

2 village officials face probe

DOJ orders . . .

The Cojuangcos of Hacienda Luisita



ON TARGET

FOUR DIGIT SUERTRES EZ2

MEGALOTTO 6/45

METRO

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Ester G. Dipasupil
Assistant Editor Cenon B. Bibe

Text us your feedback: inquirer met name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

DOJ orders charges vs mall owner's scion

By Philip C. Tubeza

JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez ordered yesterday the filing of a frustrated parricide case against the son of Harrison Plaza Mall owner Antonio Martel Jr. for the shooting of his wife in August 2003.

In a seven-page resolution, Gonzalez reversed the decision of the Makati City prosecutor to drop the charge, adding that "overwhelming evidence" showed that there was probable cause in the case that Melissa Mercado Martel filed against her husband, Robert "Roby" Puyat Martel.

'Overwhelming'

"We are of the view and so hold that based on the overwhelming evidence on record, there exists a probable cause to warrant the filing of frustrated parricide against (Robert)," Gonzalez said.

Melissa filed the case after her husband allegedly beat her up and shot her in the stomach with a .38 caliber pistol inside their condominium unit at the Ritz Towers in Makati City on Aug. 26, 2003.

"There was clearly no accidental shooting as the incident was preceded by the felonious act of (Robert) in inflicting serious physical injuries upon (Melissa) and thereafter, with intent to kill, shot her at point blank in the abdomen," Gonzalez said.

Guards, too

Gonzalez ordered the Chief State Prosecutor to conduct a preliminary investigation of Robert's security guards Fidel Nimes and Joel Castillo, who sided with him, for perjury and false testimony.

He also said that the Supreme Court should investigate Robert's lawyer, David Puyat, for making Melissa sign an affidavit of desistance while she was still recovering at the Makati Medical Center.

Gonzalez said that the physical evidence in the case debunked Robert's claim that he accidentally shot Melissa while they were quarreling in their condo unit.

He said the medico-legal reports and photographs of Melissa showed that she "not only sustained a gunshot wound but was brutally beaten prior to being shot."

"These physical evidence indubitably show that it was (Melissa) who was the victim of an unlawful aggression and proved that (Robert) was the aggressor," Gonzalez said.

He dismissed Robert's claim that he had no intention of killing his wife, noting that he was in possession of the gun at the time of the incident and he admittedly shot Melissa once.

'No accident'

"The fact that he shot her in the abdomen at close range clearly indicates his intention to kill her. This fact likewise belies his claim that what occurred was a mere accidental shooting arising from the grappling for the possession of the gun between him and (Melissa) which caused them to slam against the refrigerator door," Gonzalez said.

He said "common experience" would show that slamming on the refrigerator would not have caused the gun to go off on its own.

DOJ/A19

Warrant out for Alma Moreno

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE SAN Juan Police is looking for actress and former mayoralty candidate Alma Moreno.

Moreno, Vanessa Lacsamana-Marquez in real life, has been charged with three counts of estafa, specifically for violating the Antibouncing Checks Law.

Moreno ran and lost as Parañaque mayor in the last May elections. She is the estranged wife of former mayor Joey Marquez.

Judge Marilou Runes-Tamang of the San Juan Municipal Trial Court Branch 57 has issued a bench warrant against her.

The judge issued the warrant after Moreno failed to appear during the case's arraignment on May 25, 2004.

Supt. Rodel Jocson, San Juan Police chief, said Moreno could not be located.

"We tried our best to locate her, even soliciting the help of some people from the networks. But we have so far not succeeded," Jocson said.

Court records showed that Moreno borrowed P1.7 million in July 2002 from businesswoman Nancy Ong.

Ong had sought the court's intervention after three checks issued by Moreno were not honored at a Philippine National Bank branch in Sucat, Parañaque.

SPORTS



Shell halts skid, noses out FedEx

By Jose M. Navarro

SHELL made a bold gamble on Adonis Sta. Maria and it paid off.

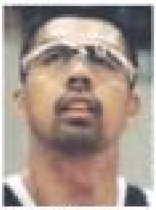
[illegible]

[illegible]

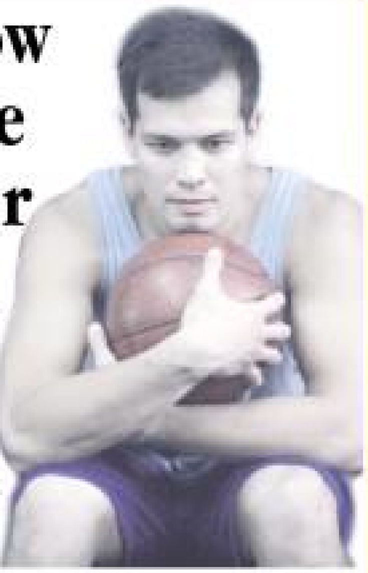




Sta. Lucia offers Aquino as trade bait



It's over now for one true PBA warrior



A symbol gone with Alvin's loss

PBL Open: Montaña tackles Air Phils

RP wushu fighter bags W. Cup gold

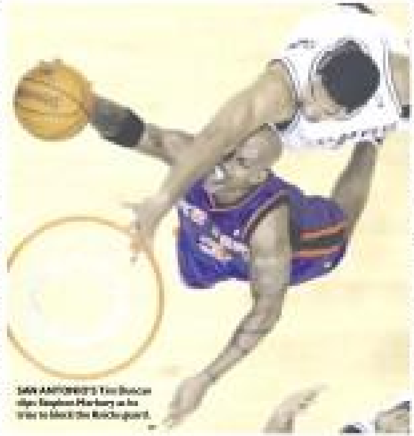


Shell halts skid . . .

Tigers nip Tams for men's badminton title

Sonics are simply super

Platinum Cup: Biggest badminton tournament



SAN ANTONIO'S Tim Duncan slips Stephon Marbury as he tries to block the Knicks guard.

Zoom to 7th straight victory; Suns triumph

12-year-old battles Agojo & company

Hewitt, Roddick dump Masters Cup rivals

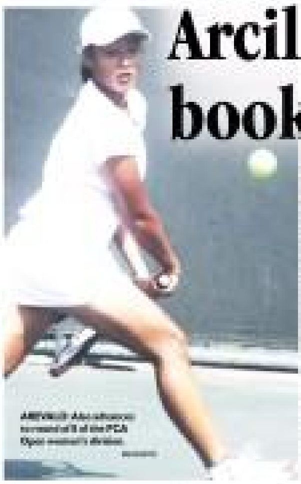


RODDICK

It's over now. . .

A symbol gone. . .

Miriam extends win run



Arcilla foils teener, books PCA q'finals

By Marc Anthony Reyes

Casa Verde golfers tie Philam Homes

Air Force booters stop Bedans

Alta Vista goes for golf sweep with 2nd batch

Emar Learning Center smothers Villafuerte XI

SPORTSWATCH

Bakbakan semis begin at Araneta today

BUSINESS

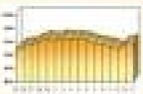
Farm production up 7.9% in Q3

CURRENCIES



STOCK MARKET

Shares up



BIR misses Oct. target



PCCC'S 100TH YEAR

Finance readies regulatory manual for credit co-ops

Perez backs Miriam on Transco issue

BOI promoting medical transcription business



PURISIMA

FLI to issue 5-yr debt paper

BIR misses . . .

Subic attracts $26M in investments

GMA-7 nets ₱1.1B as of end-September

SMC buys Malaysian packaging company

Paderanga resigns as director of PSE

MVP buys 1,000 more PLDT shares for ₱1.3M

BOI promoting . . .

UNITED colors of coffee /C4

LIFESTYLE

Editor: Chelo Banal-Formoso

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS ■ TUESDAY FITNESS ■ WEDNESDAY 2BU ■ THURSDAY FOOD ■ FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

A trip to chocolate heaven



THE FRESHEST chocolate truffles!

By J. Gamboa
Contributor

CHOCOLATE. Who doesn't like chocolate? Chocolate has been around for ages.

Traditionally used by the Aztecs as a beverage, it was then brought to Europe by the Spaniards after they colonized the New World. In Europe, the Dutch perfected the processing of the cacao bean to make chocolate as we know it today. Now it is almost impossible to get away from it.

There are so many brands, shapes, forms and, more importantly, qualities of chocolate. With all the buzz on diet—good carbs, bad carbs and so on—I only have one rule: the food you eat has to be worth the calories. Meaning it has to be of the best quality possible.

In terms of chocolate that means couverture chocolate. Without getting too technical, couverture chocolate is professional quality-grade chocolate with a minimum of 32-39 percent cocoa butter. The higher percentage of cocoa butter combined with processing means that the chocolate is glossier, snaps better when broken or bitten and, most importantly, is creamier and melts more easily in the mouth.

So, if I were to have chocolate, it might as well be couverture... After all, poor quality chocolate will have the same amount of calories as, if not more than, great-tasting chocolate.

Dream come true

Last September, I was invited to attend the Barry Callebaut Chocolate Academy in Singapore by Aceron, Callebaut Chocolate's Philippine distributor. I was lucky enough to make this trip with an all-star pastry chef group composed of Buddy Trinidad of Paul Avenue Desserts, Christine Pacis of the Chocolate Lover's Store, Pauley Adum of the Heart Crust Cake Shop, Lito Sanchez of the Westin Philippine Plaza, instructors of the Center for Culinary Arts (CCA) Ria Mariano and Alma Cui, and Barton Dogalog of Aceron.

I was the only non-pastry chef in the gang! In fact, for the longest time I have avoided all things pertaining to cakes, chocolates, breads, and most desserts. It has always been a painful and long process for me to come up with new desserts for [illegible]. Now I was in good company. Meaning, I could not only pick the brains of our instructor, Chef Jean-Marc Bernelin, but also of each and every one of my classmates.

So there we went to some industrial park 40 minutes north of Singapore, somewhere close to the Malaysian border. My companions and I [illegible] into a place that most chefs only dream of—a chocolate factory. As we entered, the heady aroma of chocolate embraced us, getting more potent as we went deeper into the factory.

Inside, massive machines crushed and pounded cacao beans and sugar, first into a paste and later into pure liquid chocolate. This was the beginning of our three-day intensive chocolate course at the Barry Callebaut Chocolate Academy.

Meet the chocolate

After a quick tour of the chocolate factory, it was time to hit the kitchen, in this case the chocolate room, a room cooled to precisely 22°C. In this room were huge marble tables

Next C2



SPICY Hot Chocolate with Banana Chocolate Panini



CHEF Lito Sanchez of the Westin "tempers" chocolates



CHEF Jean-Marc demonstrates filling pralines to Aina Cui of the Center for Culinary Arts (CCA).



CALLEBAUT Dark Couverture Chocolate ready for use



PRALINES ready for cutting on the guitar



ENROBING cut pralines with Callebaut Milk Chocolate

A trip to chocolate heaven



ART in chocolate, of 100-percent chocolate

From page C1

and various chocolate making equipment like automatic tempering machines, chocolate warmers, cutters, spray guns, paddles, spatulas and more.

Jean-Marc started us off by demonstrating pre-crystallization or tempering of chocolate using the marble table. He poured about two kilograms of liquid chocolate on the marble slab and carefully scraped it around until it thickened slightly and was ready for use. This was necessary for the chocolate to be able to set.

The "tempering" of the liquid chocolate caused the cocoa butter to form crystals that would set at room temperature. If one just melted chocolate and began to make pralines without that step the pralines would take a very long time to set, would not snap when broken and would probably melt in your hand.

After that, we began to make molded pralines. But more importantly, we began working on our creations. There are three basic types of couverture chocolate: dark chocolate, milk chocolate and white chocolate. Dark chocolate is composed of cocoa mass, cocoa butter and sugar. Milk chocolate is the same as dark chocolate but with the addition of milk powder, hence it is creamier and lighter in color. And white chocolate is just cocoa butter and sugar, that's why it is white in color.

I'm partial to the dark stuff. Some say it is bitter, but I think it is more accurate to say that it is less sweet. If you want sweet, then go for the white chocolate. The milk chocolate falls somewhere between.

You know how some people are fussy about their wine? There are some people who are like that about chocolate, too. Just like how the surroundings—soil, weather conditions, and geographical location—gives wines their own character, the same holds for chocolate. We were able to try different types of dark chocolate: 60 percent cocoa/40 percent sugar, 70 percent cocoa/30 percent sugar, certified organic, made with cocoa beans from Tanzania, Indonesia and the Caribbean. They were as different from one another as wines made in France, California and South Africa.



THE AUTHOR with his chocolate pots

Following are chocolate recipes for Lifestyle readers:

"Spicy" Hot Chocolate with Banana and Chocolate Panini

Makes two cups

"Spicy" Hot Chocolate:

1 c milk

1 c liquid whipping cream (may substitute with milk, but whipping cream is better)

Pinch of chili flakes

2 tbsp white sugar

2 tbsp cocoa powder

In a small saucepan, over low heat, heat milk and whipping cream and chili flakes. Whisk in sugar and cocoa powder until cocoa is incorporated and sugar is dissolved. Serve hot.

Banana and Chocolate Panini:

4 slices egg bread, sliced ½-inch thick (preferably Brioche or Pan de Mie)

Butter, as needed

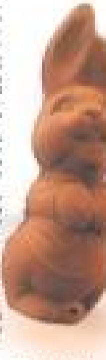
1 pc banana, sliced on the bias, 1/3-inch thick

1 tbsp white sugar

¼ c dark couverture chocolate, chopped (you could also use milk chocolate)

Powdered sugar, as needed

Butter all sides of the bread slices. Place sliced bananas on two pieces of bread, sprinkle with sugar and chopped chocolate. Cover with the other slices. In a panini pan over medium heat, pan-fry on both sides until golden brown and chocolate has melted. Dust with powdered sugar. Slice and serve with the "spicy" hot chocolate.



CHOCOLATE Velvet Bunny ready for Easter



THE CHOCOLATE GANG: Aina Cui (CCA), Ria Mariano (CCA), Dolores Paredes (Chocolate Lover's Store), Jean-Marc Bernelin (Callebaut Singapore), Lito Sanchez (Westin Philippine Plaza), Sam Mesti (Antrox), Karrie Dagdag (Antrox), Jessie de Jesus (Antrox), J. Gamboa (Cirkulo Restaurant), Precita Jolson (Shoe Chua Cake Shop), Buddy Trinidad (Park Avenue Bizparty)



The chocolate factory in Singapore













The lightness of seasonings

STEP BY STEP





Ingredients



Recipes for Christmas presents

Moussaka

Chocolate chip biscotti



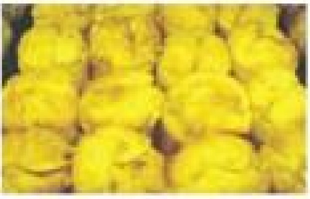


Coffees of the world right in your cup

Affordable cupps



Some like it cold





LIFESTYLE



Pasta is best served on a shallow bowl, as the sides of the bowl help anchor the pasta as it is twirled

So you want to be a chef or food vendor?

KITCHEN RESCUE



FOOD is perhaps the only business people seem to venture into these days. One wants to either be a chef or open a store selling food.

[illegible]







Mag conducts baking seminar

Pet food makers prove safety of their products

THE CONSUMER

Sale resumed

Reassurance

Make gourmet 'ensaimadas'

So you want to be a chef or food vendor?

Puttanesca

LIFESTYLE



PRINCE of Jaipur's Tandoori Masala Ribs (Rack of Australian Lamb)

Say 'oooh-la-lamb'

A month-long festival showcases new dishes using tender Australian meat

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Rudy Esperas

IT'S the annual lamb festival and some 30 restaurants, hotels and retail chains have added to their menus for the whole month of November the meat prepared in various ways and flavors.

"Oooh-La-Lamb," the month-long lamb promotion, sponsored by Meat and Livestock Australia, will be a treat for those who already enjoy the tender, juicy taste and an opportunity for those who dislike its smell and complain about its gamy aftertaste to give it another chance.

Now on its third year, the annual event [illegible] the versatility of the meat as a main dish.

To those who have yet to be introduced to the meat, lamb is different from goat. It comes from a young sheep, so the meat is lighter and not so pungent.

"Lamb is a sheep less than one year old (technically 3-9 months old) and is known for its tender meat," says Agnes Bichon, the Philippine representative of Meat and Livestock Australia, promotional arm for the importers of Australian beef and lamb in the Philippines. "Lamb between 12 and 24 months is called yearling; when over 2 years, [illegible] to as mutton and has a much stronger flavor and less tender flesh."

Baby and spring lambs are both milk-fed. Baby lamb is [illegible] slaughtered when it is between 6-8 weeks old. Spring lamb is usually 3-5 months old; regular lamb is less than a year.

Bichon says Australian lamb has a distinct, delicate and mild flavor, probably one reason it is now becoming a popular staple in many restaurants and hotels. She adds that taste for the exquisite red meat is growing among Filipinos.

Australia's livestock industry has been in existence since 1788. Today the country has more than 100 million sheep and 27 million cattle. Australia sheep graze on lush, green pasture in an environment abundant in clean water, fresh air and clear blue sky.

Distinct taste and smell

Many people avoid eating lamb because of its characteristic smell and taste ([illegible], in Filipino). But, Bichon explains that the meat's smell and taste depend on the cut, manner of cooking and the animal's age.

Some lamb cuts are more tender than others. Certain cooking methods can increase the tenderness and enhance its flavor. For instance, leg, shoulder, cutlet, rack and short loin are ideal for dry cooking (i.e., pan-frying, oven-roasting, baking, grilling and barbecue). They require shorter cooking time.

For wet cooking (stewing, braising or pot roasting), the leg, shoulder, shanks and neck/riblets are more suitable, requiring longer cooking time.

Bichon says, when buying lamb, let color be the guide. "In general, the darker the color, the older the animal. Baby lamb will be pale

[illegible]



LE SOUFFLE'S Roulades of Australian Lamb Rump filled with Peppers





Say 'oooh-la-lamb'

Lip-smacking dishes

Wine tasting at Mandarin



Welcome a new arrival





Love at every bite

By Rica Y. Vergara







At Amoroma, everything is meant to evoke the feel of a traditional Italian trattoria

New outlet of American bar-resto

Dining out



